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ABSTRACT

A study determined the relationship between communicator style and argumentativeness and clarified the relationship between psychological gender and communicator style. Three hundred and fourteen college students enrolled in introductory health and communication courses responded to the Communicator Style Measure, the Argumentativeness Scale, and the Personal Attributes Scale. Results indicated that argumentative individuals could be predicted on the basis of their contentious, relaxed, animated, and open communicator style. Concerning gender, results indicated that men perceive themselves as contentious and women see themselves as more animated, but not more friendly or attentive. Psychological gender comparisons showed feminine people are more animated, attentive and friendly, but less relaxed and have a lower communicator image than androgynous individuals. Masculine individuals are more relaxed than androgynous people, but less animated and friendly, and have a lower communicator image. Androgynous individuals possess both masculine instrumental traits and feminine expressive traits; they are more behaviorally flexible and should be consistently better communicators. The undifferentiated person who has a deficit of both masculine and feminine characteristics perceives himself or herself as a poorer overall communicator and is likely to have greater problems in interacting with others than do androgynous, feminine, or masculine people. A seven-page bibliography and tables of data are appended. (SRT)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATOR STYLE, ARGUMENTATIVENESS, AND GENDER

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATOR STYLE, ARGUMENTATIVENESS, AND GENDER

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between communicator style, argumentativeness and gender. As predicted, communicator style variables predict trait argumentativeness. Men view themselves as more contentious than women, and women view themselves as more animated than men. However, psychological gender is shown to be more useful in predicting communicator style than is biological sex and significant differences were determined on seven of the ten style variables.

Communicator style has become, in a very short time, one of the most frequently researched communication constructs (DeWine & Pearson, 1985). The popularity of Norton's Communicator Style Measure (1978) is based on solid theoretical formulation and clear empirical validation (i. e., Montgomery & Norton, 1981; Norton, 1978; 1983). Argumentativeness has similarly enjoyed a celebrated and meteoric rise in communication research (i. e., Infante, 1981; 1982; 1983; Infante & Rancer, 1982).

While these two communication constructs have been examined in a variety of contexts, the relationship between them has not been determined. Nonetheless, Norton (1983) hints that such a relationship is likely. Infante does not provide the same prediction in his research reports and, because he developed the Argumentativeness Scale after Norton's measure gained publication and widespread use, it appears that he does not agree that the two constructs are kin. One purpose of this research report is to determine the relationship between communicator style and argumentativeness.

The impact of gender on communication is substantial (Pearson, 1985). However, communication researchers are uncertain whether to operationalize gender as a matter of biology or a matter of learning through our interactions with others. Biological sex may be most relevant when we consider people's perceptions of others; psychological sex type may be most salient when we consider one's perception of himself or herself. The role of gender orientation in describing one's communicator

style has not been determined. A second purpose of this study is to clarify the relationship between psychological gender and communicator style.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

COMMUNICATOR STYLE

Norton (1978) developed the Communicator Style Measure to determine the way one "Verbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how liberal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, and understood" (p. 99). He posits that style is seen as a function that gives form to content, and it is a function of consistently recurring communicative associations. Individuals are perceived to have a certain style because of norm-defining patterns of style or because a sufficient number of "associations have consistently recurred" (Norton, 1983, p. 35).

Norton asserts that social science research has allowed the emergence of subconstructs of the style construct including impression leaving, contentious, open, dramatic, dominant, relaxed, friendly, attentive and animated. Norton also included communicator image as a "dependent assessment variable of communicator ability" (Montgomery & Norton, 1981, p. 123). Communicator Image measures an individual's overall perception of whether or not she or he is a "good" communicator (Norton, 1983). The factor is based on the assumption that a person with a positive communicator image finds it easier to interact with others regardless of the relationship between himself or herself and the other person. Impression leaving focuses on whether a

person is remembered as a result of the communicative stimuli that has been presented. Both the sender and the receiver are involved in impression leaving since the receiver must recall the sender's behavior Norton (1983).

Contentious communication is argumentative. Norton (1978) explains that the contentious individual is someone who regularly quarrels with others and disputes their assertions. This person is viewed as belligerent and the cause of interpersonal unrest. Although this variable emerges as one closely associated with the dominant style, it has potentially negative components (Norton, 1983). Dominant communication is that which is assertive (Norton, 1983). The individual who communicates in a dominant way is more confident, enthusiastic, forceful, active, competitive, self-confident, self-assured, conceited and businesslike (Scherer, London, & Wolf, 1973). He or she also tends to feel more understood in communicating with others (Mortensen & Arntson, 1974).

The friendly variable has a wide range--from lack of hostility to deep intimacy (Norton, 1978). It is conceptually similar to affection, caring, and love. The communicator who is attentive may be viewed as one who is empathic or a careful listener (Norton, 1983). The open communicator is probably one who is affable, conversational, convivial, gregarious, unreserved, extroverted, and approachable (Norton, 1983).

The animated communicator is one who provides sustained and frequent eye contact, uses a great deal of facial expression,

and gestures often (Norton, 1978). The dramatic communicator is someone who tells jokes, anecdotes, and stories when he or she communicates, dramatizes a great deal, physically and vocally acts out what he or she is discussing, and verbally exaggerates his or her message. The relaxed factor refers to low levels of anxiety and tension. Norton (1983) writes that it suggests calmness, peace and serenity as well as confidence and comfortableness.

ARGUMENTATIVENESS

Argumentativeness was operationalized by Infante (1981) as ". . . a generally stable trait which predisposes the individual to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attempt refutation of positions which other people take on such issues" (p. 273). He originally identified argumentativeness as a trait because he found that some people seemed to argue more than others about controversial issues and they appeared to find it pleasurable. Infante and Rancer (1982) claimed that such "between person variance suggested an argumentativeness trait" (p. 72).

Infante (1981) determined that individuals could be high, moderate, or low in their ability and desire to argue. High argumentatives perceived arguing as an exciting intellectual challenge, a competitive situation which entails defending a position in order to win. Feelings of excitement ad anticipation preceded an argument and after the argument the individual felt "invigorated, satisfied, and experienced a sense of accom

plishment" (Infante & Rancer, 1982, p. 74). Low argumentatives felt just the opposite, with unpleasant feelings before, during, and after an argument.

The high and low argumentatives could be distinguished on the basis of a number of characteristics. High argumentatives were perceived as more inflexible, more interested in the argument, more verbose, more willing to argue, showed more expertise, dynamism, and skill, and displayed more effort to win the argument. High argumentatives also reported earlier family birth order, more high school training, higher college grade point averages, preferred smaller college classes, and were more liberal (Infante, 1982).

Argumentativeness has generally been viewed as a positive predisposition. Johnson and Johnson (1979) described some of the benefits that are derived from engaging in argument: improved self-concept, greater social intelligence, improved learning, reduced egocentric thinking, greater creativity, and enhanced problem-solving and decision-making. Argumentative individuals are more likely to be selected as group leaders and they have a strong influence on group decision-making (Schultz, 1982).

However, recent evidence suggests that argumentativeness may not always be beneficial. Infante, Wall, Leap and Danielson (1984) found that in a social conflict situation, where the adversaries were of the same sex, men preferred more verbal

aggression with more argumentative, as opposed to less argumentative, adversaries and that females preferred verbal aggression less and with both high and low argumentatives. In other words, men who are high argumentatives may be the target for more verbal aggression than are men who are low argumentatives. Infante (1985) suggests that such negative effects may be overcome.

Men and women are not similarly disposed to argue with others (Infante, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985). College males argue more than college females and they score significantly higher than women on an argumentativeness scale (Infante, 1982; Infante & Rancer, 1982). Schultz and Anderson (1982) found similar results in their examination of the role of argument in negotiation. Women scored low in argumentativeness and reported that they viewed arguing negatively as it was considered "unfeminine" and "unfriendly." Although biological sex did not predict likelihood to argue, Rancer and Dierks-Stewart (1983) found that psychological gender influenced whether an individual would avoid or approach an argument. Masculine and androgynous individuals appear to approach arguments while feminine and undifferentiated presons tend to avoid them.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATOR STYLE AND ARGUMENTATIVENESS

Norton's conceptualization of communicator style is based on holistic views of communication. He carefully considered only those studies which represented major and comprehensive studies

of interpersonal communication. Although his approach is self-admittedly biased, it provides a general model of interpersonal communication style. Furthermore, it is conceived as a trait approach; that is, Norton suggests that individuals have certain styles that seem to persist over a variety of situations and regardless of context. To the extent that argumentativeness is similarly a trait that describes one interpersonal communication style, it may be hypothesized to bear some relationship to Norton's conception of communicator style.

However, a more precise relationship can be hypothesized. Norton (1983) provides an obvious connection between argumentativeness and contentiousness as he writes, "The contentious communicator is argumentative" (p. 67). He explains that contentiousness helps in explaining dominance, but he observes that the two styles are distinctive:

> The dominant style seems to have fewer negative connotations than the contentious style, although both are closely related on at least two dimensions. Dominant predicts communicator image most strongly in all regression analyses. Contentious, on the other hand, does not make it into any of the equations. . . .contentious. . . split into two clusters. The first cluster centers on being quick to challenge the other and being argumentative. The second cluster seems more closely related to "being precise," but not necessarily contentious (p. 87).

Argumentativeness, conceptualized as a trait, appears to be one part of the contentious communicator style. Furthermore, the close relationship between contentiousness and dominance allows us to speculate that dominance would similarly predict trait argumentativeness. We offer the following hypothesis, sub-hypothesis and research question.

H_1: Individual communicator style variables, or combinations of variables, predict argumentativeness.

H_{1a}: Contentiousness predicts argumentativeness.

RQ_1: Does dominance predict argumentativeness?

GENDER

Gender may be viewed as biological sex which is primarily determined by one's chromosomal makeup or as psychological sex which is defined as "the extent to which a person has internalized society's sex-typed standards of desirable behavior for men and for women" (Pearson, 1985, p. 10). Individuals are categorized as feminine if they endorse feminine behavior and do not endorse masculine behavior; masculine if they endorse masculine behavior and do not endorse feminine behavior; androgynous if they endorse both masculine and feminine behavior; and undifferentiated if they endorse neither sets of behavior. Both biological sex and psychological sex are relevant to communication researchers. Biological sex is important as we study interactants' differential response to men and women and the attributes that are prescribed to individuals who are perceived to be men or women. Psychological sex has

greater salience when we are examining the self-report behavior of people. To the extent that we wish to understand individuals' perceptions of themselves and their own behavior, we must assess psychological sex.

The influence of psychological sex on individuals' perceptions of their own communicative behaviors has been widely documented (i. e., Greenblatt, Hasenauer & Freimuth, 1980; Rancer & Dierks-Stewart, 1983; Serafini & Pearson, 1984; Talley & Richmond, 1980). A variety of studies have demonstrated that inconsistent findings on the impact of gender on communication can be reduced by substituting psychological sex for biological sex. However, this change in operationalization has not eradicated all of the inconsistency or confusion that exists surrounding gender and communication. Part of the problem was explained on the basis of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) which was criticized for psychometric inadequacy (i. e., Gaudreau, 1977; Pearson, 1980). More satisfactory instruments including the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974) have proven helpful.

COMMUNICATOR STYLE AND GENDER

The subconstructs that comprise communicator style may be sex-linked. Let us consider the potential gender differences in these subconstructs, and thus in communicator style.

Impression leaving. This factor involves both the sender and the receiver since the receiver must recall the sender's behavior. Both women and men seem to be concerned with

impression formation and impression leaving (Kramer, 1978). McDowell and McDowell (1984) determined that females rated impression leaving significantly higher than males.

Contentious. In the past, men were viewed as more contentious than women as they used more hostile verbs, profanity, ad expletives than women (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Lakoff, 1975). Staley (1978) determined that women and men were equally likely to use expletives although women predicted that men would use more expletives than they would and men predicted that women would use fewer expletives than they would. Cashell (1978) found that men were more contentious than women, and Montgomery and Norton (1981) replicated this finding.

Open. The open communicator is affable, conversational, convivial, gregarious, unreserved, extroverted, and approachable (Norton, 1983). Females are considered to be more open than males stereotypically; that is, the cultural perception of women is that they are highly talkative and disclosive. However, behavioral studies have not consistently validated these perceptions. For example, some studies show that men talk more than women (Wood, 1966; Swacker, 1975). While most research shows that women disclose more than men (i.e., Greenblatt, Hasenauer, & Freimuth, 1980; DeForest & Stone, 1980; LeVine & Franco, 1981), a few studies conclude that men disclose more than women, under certain circumstances (Sermat & Smyth, 1973; Gilbert & Whiteneck, 1976).

Dramatic. The dramatic communicator tells jokes and stories, dramatizes, physically and vocally acts out, and verbally exaggerates. Men may be more dramatic than women

(McCroskey, 1977). Aires (1977) explains that men seem to "engage in dramatizing, storytelling, jumping from one anecdote to another and receiving a comraderie through the shareing of closeness and laughter" (p. 296). However, the stereotype that women have no sense of humor may be based on the sexist nature of a great deal of American humor (i. e., Chapman & Gadfield, 1976). Furthermore, the clothing and artifactual differences between women and men would suggest that women may appear to be more dramatic than men (i.e., Horn, 1975; Proctor, 1978; Lurie, 1981). Last, women are more likely to be observed than are men (Argyle & Williams, 1969) which suggests that they might be more interesting or higher in dramatic appeal.

Dominance. Dominance is equated with assertiveness (Norton, 1983). Men have generally been found to have a more dominant style (i. e., Markel, Long, & Saine, 1973; Kramer & Clark, 1975; Zimmerman & West, 1975), although a recent study could not demonstrate that men were dominant and women were submissive in mixed sex dyads (Martin & Craig, 1983).

Relaxed. This factor refers to low levels of anxiety and tension. Mehrabian (1971) posits that men are more calm than women. McCroskey (1977) demonstrates that men experience less communication apprehension than women.

Friendly. This variable is conceptually similar to affection, caring, and love. Women may be perceived to be friendlier than men since they are more concerned with relationships than are men (i. e., Baird & Bradley, 1979; Welsh,

1979; Serafini & Pearson, 1984) and because they use far more positive affective nonverbal cues than do men (Mehrabian, 1972; Caul, 1974; Buck & Miller, 1974; Argyle, 1975; Dierks-Stewart, 1976; Frances, 1979; Parlee, 1979). Montgomery and Norton (1981) and McDowell and McDowell (1984) determined that women had a greater potential to use a more friendly style than did men.

Attentive. The attentive communicator is one who is empathic or a careful listener (Norton, 1983). Women appear to be more attentive than men as they show greater social sensitivity, utilize more nonverbal cues including eye gaze, smiling, nodding, and more responsive nonverbal expressions than men (Henley, 1977; Mehrabian, 1972; Pearson, 1985; Thayer & Schiff, 1975). Talley and Richmond (1980) determined that women perceived themselves as more attentive than did men.

Animated. The animated communicator provides sustained and frequent eye contact, uses a great deal of facial expression, and gestures often (Norton, 1978). The literature which has been cited above suggests that women are more animated than men. In addition, McDowell and McDowell (1984) and Talley and Richmond (1980) determined that women were more likely to have an animated style than did men.

Communicator Image. Communicator Image measures an individual's overall perception of whether or not she or he is a "good" communicator (Norton, 1983). Clear gender differences on communicator image cannot be predicted from other literature.

Based on this review of biological gender differences we offer the following hypothesis and sub-hypotheses. In addition we offer a research question.

H_2: Men and women differ significantly in their self-reported communicator style.

H_{2a}: Men will be significantly higher on the communicator style, contentious, than will women.

H_{2b}: Women will be significantly higher on the communicator style, friendly, than will men.

H_{2c}: Women will be significantly higher on the communicator style, attentive, than will men.

H_{2d}: Women will be significantly higher on the communicator style, animated, than will men.

RQ_2: Will individuals who subscribe to different psychological gender types differ significantly in their self-reported communicator style?

METHOD

Procedure

Three hundred and fourteen college students (39% male and 61% female) at a middle-sized midwestern university enrolled in introductory health and communication courses voluntarily served as the respondents in this study. The Communicator Style Measure (Norton, 1978), the Argumentativeness Scale (Infante & Rancer, 1982), and the Personal Attributes Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974) were administered and standardized instructions were provided to all of the groups.

Instruments

Communicator style. To measure communicator style, Norton's scale (1978) was used. The instrument includes 51 likert-type items which are divided among the subconstructs. Nine of the subscales have five items each while communicator image has six. Reliabilities for a college student sample were friendly (.37), animated (.56), attentive (.57), contentions (.65), dramatic (.68), impression leaving (.69), open (.69), relaxed (.71), communicator image (.72), and dominant (.82).

Argumentativeness. Argumentativeness was measured by using the Argumentativeness Scale (Infante & Rancer, 1982). The Likert-type scale consists of twenty items, ten items measure one's motivation to approach arguments and ten items measure one's motivation to avoid arguments. The difference between these two subscales provide a measure of trait argumentativeness. High internal consistency for the two factors of approach and avoidance have been determined: Cronbach's coefficient alpha ranges from .84 to .91 for appproach and .81 to .86 for avoidance (Infante & Rancer, 1982; Rancer & Dierks-Stewart, 1983). Construct, criterion, convergent and discriminant validity have also been reported (Infante & Rancer, 1982).

Infante (1981) used his instrument to divide people into high, moderate and low argumentative groups based upon trait argumentativeness and the sample mean. High argumentatives scored greater than one standard deviation above the mean, and low argumentatives scored more than one standard deviation below the mean.

Psychological gender. Psychological gender was measured by using the short form of the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974). The twenty-four item scale is divided into masculine, feminine, and masculine-feminine subscales. The questionnaire results are used to classify masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated identities. Respondents are classified into psychological gender types by the median-slit procedure. Individuals who are above the median on masculinity and below the median on femininity are classified as masculine; those who are above the median on femininity and below the median on masculinity are classified as feminine; those who are above the median on femininity and above the median on masculinity are classified as androgynous; and those who are below the median on femininity and below the median on masculinity are classified as undifferentiated. Reliabilities for the short form of the PAQ, using Cronbach's coefficient alphas are reported as .85 for masculine, .82 for feminine, and .78 for the masculine-feminine subscale (Spence & Helmreich, 1977).

Data Analysis

The first hypothesis and sub-hypothesis and the first research question considered the relationship between communicator style and argumentativeness and were tested with regression analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were also computed to examine the relationship between these two constructs.

The second hypothesis and sub-hypotheses and the second research question examined the relationship between biological and psychological sex and communicator style. They were tested by analysis of variance with biological and psychological sex entered as the independent variables and with the communicator style variables serving as the dependent measures. Scheffe tests were computed to discover differences between various levels of psychological gender when significant differences were determined.

RESULTS

The three self-report instruments were shown to be valid, through the factor analyses that were completed, and reliable as evidenced by Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The factor analysis of the Communicator Style construct yielded 9 factors which generally conform to Norton's hypothesized dimensions; the factor analysis on the Argumentativeness Scale yielded two dimensions: approach and avoid; and the factor analysis on the PAQ yielded two dimensions: masculine and feminine. The reliability of the Argumentativeness Scale was .82 for the approach subscale and .77 for the avoid subscale. On the Personal Attributes Questionnaire, the coefficient alpha for the masculine subscale was .55 and for the feminine subscale, it was .74. The reliabilities for the Communicator Style Measure were dominant, .74; dramatic, .68; contentious, .63; animated, .67; impression-leaving, .73; relaxed, .63; attentive, .53; open, .61; friendly, .35; and communicator image, .57. The reliabilities for the masculine subscale on the PAQ and for the attentive, friendly, and communicator image subscales of Communicator Style were low and may suggest inconsistencies across the sample on these subconstructs.

The first hypothesis stated that individual communicator style variables or combinations of variables would predict trait argumentativeness. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between these constructs and correlations were computed to further understand the relationship. The correlations, provided in Table 1, should be carefully interpreted because of the large sample size.

All of the subconstructs had a significant relationship to trait argumentativeness except for animated and friendly. All of the other subscales showed a weak relationship to trait argumentativeness with correlations ranging from $r = -.11$ to $r = -.27$, except for contentiousness. Contentiousness correlated higher than any other variable with trait argumentativeness ($r = -.48$). The correlation showed that the more argumentative (a high score on the Argumentativeness Scale) an individual was, the more contentious (low score on contentious items) he or she was likely to be.

The multiple regression analysis provided a clear picture of the significant variables associated with trait argumentativeness (Table 2). Contentious accounted for 22.9 percent of the variance; with contentious controlled, the communicator style, relaxed, contributed 3.9 percent; animated accounted for 1.1; and open accounted for 1.4. These four variables thus account for 29.3 percent of the variance in trait argumentativeness.

Two communicator style variables, contentious and animated, varied significantly between males and females. Men were found to be more contentious than women ($F = 6.96$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$) and women reported being more animated that men ($F = 5.03$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$).

Individuals who subscribe to different psychological gender types differ significantly in their self-reported communicator style. Significant differences were found on seven of the ten subscales: animated ($F = 3.97$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), impression leaving ($F = 4.52$, $df = 3$, $p < .004$), relaxed ($F = 7.72$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$), attentive ($F = 6.82$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$), open ($F = 3.71$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), friendly ($F = 5.58$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), and communicator image ($F = 7.31$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$). Means and standard deviations are provided in Table 3.

Individuals reporting a feminine style were significantly more animated than masculine and undifferentiated identities. Androgynous individuals were found to be significantly more impressionable than undifferentiated people. Both undifferentiated and feminine types were less relaxed than androgynous and masculine individuals. Feminine identities were more attentive than undifferentiateds. Androgynous individuals were significantly more open in their communication style than were both undifferentiated and masculine types. Undifferentiated individuals were less friendly than both androgynous and feminine identities. Androgynous types were significantly higher in communicator image than the other three identities. A summary of the psychological gender and communicator style findings are presented in Table 4.

DISCUSSION

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATOR STYLE AND ARGUMENTATIVENESS

In this study, communicator style was hypothesized to predict argumentativeness. The communicator styles contentious,

relaxed, animated, and open entered the regression analysis and explained over 29% of the variance. We predicted that contentiousness would be the strongest predictor of argumentativeness and it was with 23% of the variance explained. We asked if dominance would predict argumentativeness and although it correlated highly with trait argumentativeness, it did not enter the regression equation. This discrepancy is due to the large overlap between the contentious and dominant styles which was theorized by Norton (1983).

Argumentative individuals could be predicted on the basis of their contentious, relaxed, animated, and open communicator style. Let us consider the implications of such a finding. Infante (1982) explained that high argumentatives are more inflexible, more interested in the argument, more verbose, more willing to argue, showed more expertise, dynamism, and skill, and displayed more effort to win the argument. The contentious person is one who is, by definition, argumentative. But what of relaxed, animated, and open styles? The relaxed individual probably has low levels of anxiety and tension and is calm, confident, and comfortable. The animated communicator is one who provides sustained and frequent eye contact, uses a great deal of facial expression, and gestures often. The open communicator is gregarious and extroverted. The contribution of these communicator styles to the prediction of argumentativeness is consistent with Infante's theory.

Schultz (1982) determined that argumentative individuals are more likely to be selected as group leaders and they have a

strong influence on group decision-making. The high correlation between dominance and argumentativeness helps us to understand this finding. Argumentative individuals are dominant and dominant people often emerge in leadership positions.

One important question remains. Is contentiousness/ argumentativeness a positive or negative characteristic? Infante's theorizing and research suggests that argumentativeness is positive. Norton states that contentiousness is negative. Yet, the two are highly related constructs. The correlation between argumentativeness and contentiousness is .48 which suggests that over 23% of the common variance is accounted for. Nearly 77% of the variance of each construct is not held in common. Perhaps this area holds the explanation for differences in positive or negative connotation. Future researchers are especially encouraged to consider characteristics that may overlap with either argumentativeness or contentiousness as measured by Communicator Style.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATOR STYLE AND GENDER

In this study, men and women were predicted to differ in their communicator style. Specifically, we predicted that men would see themselves as more contentious and that women would see themselves as more friendly, more attentive, and more animated. Our findings were mixed. We may answer our overall hypothesis positively because some differences emerged. Men did perceive themselves as contentious. However, women did not view themselves as more friendly or more attentive; they did see themselves as more animated as predicted.

These findings are not consistent with the results of other researchers and the discrepancy of the findings suggests that biological sex may not be the most useful way of operationalizing gender in self-report studies. One's biology may be useful as a way of being categorized by others, but it is not most explanatory in understanding how people view themselves. We would support psychological gender as a self-report tool and our results on psychological gender add evidence to our argument.

We asked an overall research question concerning the relationship between psychological gender and communicator style. For the ten style variables we examined, seven yielded significant differences. These differences which were listed in the results section may be summarized. First, androgynous people tend to report more or greater amounts of any communicator style on which they have significant differences from others. These include being impressionable, open, relaxed, and communicator image. Second, by contrast, undifferentiated individuals have less or lower amounts of any communicator style on which they have significant differences from others. These include being animated, relaxed, attentive, friendly, open, and communicator image. Feminine people are more animated, attentive and friendly, but they are less relaxed and they have a lower communicator image than androgynous individuals. Masculine individuals are more relaxed, but less animated, friendly, and they have a lower communicator image than androgynous people.

We conclude, first, that androgynous individuals appear to view themselves as better communicators than the other three groups and they view themselves as possessing more of the styles represented in Communicator Style. These conclusions are consistent with theorizing that has guided the development of psychological gender. The androgynous person, because he or she possesses both masculine instrumental traits and feminine expressive ones is more behaviorally flexible and should be a consistently better communicator. Similarly, because he or she incorporates the traits of two groups, he or she has a larger behavioral repertoire.

Similarly, the undifferentiated person who has a deficit of both masculine or feminine characteristics perceives himself or herself as a poorer overall communicator and he or she rates himself or herself lower on the Communicator Styles than do others. The unfortunate conclusion, consistent with other research, is that the undifferentiated individual is likely to have greater problems in interacting with others than do androgynous, feminine, or masculine people.

Third, feminine individuals display some of the characteristics that we would predict to be associated with those people who had internalized a female role. Specifically, feminine individuals are animated, attentive, and friendly. Previous literature cited in the first section of this paper would predict such conclusions. Further, our sub-hypotheses on biological gender, demonstrated by earlier studies, allowed us to predict exactly these relationships.

Fourth, masculine individuals evidence more relaxation than do feminine and undifferentiated individuals. Although we did not specifically predict such an outcome, earlier literature suggests this conclusion. Recall that Mehrabian (1971) suggested that men are more calm than women and that McCroskey (1977) demonstrated that men experience less communication apprehension than women.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This investigation allows two overall recommendations: 1) Researchers are encouraged to use the Communicator Style Measure rather than the Argumentativeness Scale in future research, or at least consider the overlap between some of the Communicator Styles and Trait Argumentativeness, and 2) Researchers are encouraged to use biological sex when conceptualizing gender as a perceptual variable and psychological sex when viewing gender as an element of self-description.

One of the fundamental theoretical tasks of communication researchers is to identify important dispositions from among the array of those imaginable for particular conceptual and empirical attention. The limited available resources mitigate against duplication of effort. Convergent and discriminant construct validity allow us to identify similarities and differences in the development of new communication instruments. Future investigators must carefully consider the costs and benefits of conceptually and empirically similar measures.

Psychological gender has been misunderstood in some psychological and communication literature. Many investigators were willing to substitute psychological sex for biological sex

in all of their work. Others, noting the inconsistent findings, held that biology was more relevant than one's learned sex role. This study demonstrates that psychological sex may be more relevant in examining the relationships among one's self-reported characteristics than is biological sex. Future researchers must clearly identify the role that gender plays in the development of their investigation.

Earlier studies determined the relationship between biological and psychological gender and argumentativeness. Those studies found, in general, that such a relationship existed and tended to support the idea that men are more argumentative than women and/or that masculine and androgynous people may be more argumentative than feminine or undifferentiated individuals. Although our goal was not to replicate an earlier study, we did analyze our argumentativeness data for biological and psychological gender and our results were consistent with earlier results.

One of our purposes was to examine the relationship between biological and psychological gender and Communicator Style, however. As such, we determined that contentiousness was endorsed more by men than by women, but no differences emerged on this dimension for psychological gender.

The relationship between argumentativeness and contentiousness and the impact of gender on these communication constructs encourages us to speculate about these consistent findings. Women and men do not hold the same world view nor do they endorse the same moral values (Gilligan, 1980; Kramarae,

1981). Even though women tend to be animated, they are not contentious. Women are generally more supportive in conversations than are men (Thorne & Henley, 1977; Pearson, 1985). The feminine identity which is higher in empathy, caring, and nurturing, encourages them to be more concerned with the internal psychological states of other communicators (McMillan, et. al, 1977). Women may view arguments as stressful events for themselves as well as others thus accounting for their avoidance behavior. Women and men may perceive arguing and argumentativeness differently.

Perhaps argumentativeness and contentiousness are associated with male behavior and seen as a masculine task. Deaux and Farris (1977) determined that differences between the sexes occurred primarily when the task was labeled masculine. Deaux (1984) concluded that many findings of differences between women and men are influenced by task characteristics. She speculated that "Some tasks may not be neutral arenas in which to test possible differences" (Deaux, 1984, p. 107).

Before we conclude that argumentativeness or contentiousness are desirable communicative behaviors, we need to consider the world view of the individuals for whom we are prescribing such behaviors. Being viewed as argumentative may bring rewards for men, but similar rewards may not be forthcoming for women. Further, the identification of a behavior as "masculine" or "feminine" may first need to be eroded before a subcultural group will view it within their behavioral arena.

The underlying implication of this study is that it is vitally important for people to feel that they have good communicator images. This would enhance relationships and encourage communication between people. This study showed that argumentativeness does not relate to positive communication image. In fact, it showed that high argumentatives are contentious which, according to Norton, describes a communicator who is both quarrelsome and belligerent. If we continue to encourage people (especially women) to be argumentative, we are recommending quarrelsome and belligerent behavior. More important, we should prescribe positive communicator images.

Confusion abounds concerning the definitions of the argumentative, dominant, and contentious dimensions of communicative behavior. Before we further develop teaching strategies and seminars on increasing argumentative skills, we need to determine the semantic space of argumentativeness and how we can use it to increase communicator image.

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Table 1

Correlations Between Communicator Style Subconstructs and Trait Argumentativeness

Variable	Trait Argumentativeness
Dominant	.27 ***
Dramatic	-.20 ***
Contentious	-.48 ***
Animated	.04
Impression Leaving	-.25 ***
Relaxed	-.26 ***
Attentive	-.16 **
Open	.-19 ***
Friendly	.00
Communication Image	-.12 *

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Table 2

Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables
Explaining Trait Argumentativeness

Trait Argumentativeness

Variable	Multiple R	R Square	R Square Change (%)	Beta	F Change
Contentious	.478	.229	22.90	-.478	79.74 *
Relaxed	.517	.268	3.90	-.200	14.36 *
Animated	.528	.279	1.14	.108	4.22 *
Open	.541	.293	1.36	-.130	5.10 *

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Samp'e Size

for Psychological Gender and Communication Style

	MASCULINE			FEMININE			ANDROGYNOUS			UNDIFFERENTIATED		
	MEAN	STD DEV	N	MEAN	STD DEV	N	MEAN	STD DEV	N	MEAN	STD DEV	N
ATTENTIVE	12.49	2.57	63	12.63	2.62	68	11.72	2.56	97	13.47	2.56	70
OPEN	14.86	3.08	66	14.07	3.52	68	13.60	3.31	101	15.14	3.64	71
FRIENDLY	12.55	2.32	63	11.43	1.89	69	11.33	2.44	100	12.66	2.21	67
ANIMATED	12.37	3.37	62	10.49	3.01	69	11.24	3.12	101	12.54	3.05	67
IMPRESSION LEAVING	12.24	2.81	66	13.04	3.25	70	11.84	2.75	101	13.51	2.80	72
RELAXED	14.75	3.01	65	16.98	3.47	67	14.49	3.16	98	16.40	2.81	70
DOMINANT	14.28	3.51	63	16.18	3.53	68	14.37	3.66	101	15.24	3.70	70
DRAMATIC	13.46	3.68	65	14.14	3.57	70	12.92	3.20	98	13.82	3.29	71
CONTENTIOUS	13.88	3.15	66	16.37	3.22	70	14.58	3.27	101	15.18	3.16	71
COMMUNICATOR IMAGE	15.59	2.98	63	15.92	2.99	67	14.08	3.20	96	16.33	3.43	67

Table 4

Summary of Significant Findings for
Psychological Gender and Communicator Style

Feminine (F)	Undifferentiated (U)
more animated than M and U	less animated than F
less relaxed than A and M	less relaxed than A and M
more attentive than U	less attentive than F
more friendly than M and U	less friendly than A and F
lower communicator image than A	less open than A
	lower communicator image than A
	less impressionable than A

Androgynous (A)	Masculine (M)
more impressionable than U	less animated than F
more open than U	more relaxed than F and U
more relaxed than F and U	less friendly than F
higher communicator image than F, M, and U	lower communicator image than A